

CLAIMS:

1. A secure electronic media container for storing, transporting and/or providing a rights management interface to electronic media content, said container having said electronic media content stored therein and data, external of but attached to or otherwise associated with said container, representative of the media handler and/or a rights management mechanism required to open and play said content.
2. Apparatus for handling the contents of a secure container as claimed in claim 1, in which is stored electronic media content of arbitrary format, the apparatus comprising means for determining from said external data what, if any, digital rights management mechanism was used to package said content and for retrieving or otherwise accessing an appropriate digital rights management handler accordingly, means for passing said content through said digital rights management handler, means for determining from said external data the media handler required to access and handle the content and for retrieving or otherwise accessing an appropriate media handler and means for passing said content through said media handler.
3. A secure electronic media container according to claim 1, comprising a secure container containing media content having attached or otherwise bound thereto metadata which is universally readable and/or decipherable and describes the underlying media format and digital rights management mechanism(s) employed to package the content.
4. A secure electronic container according to claim 3, wherein the metadata describing the underlying media format encapsulates the content itself.
5. A secure electronic container according to claim 3, wherein the metadata describing the underlying media format includes a remote network resource address at which the content itself is stored.
6. A secure electronic container according to claim 3, wherein said metadata includes descriptive metadata relevant to said content and/or a reference to a resource location

of a format specification and/or a reference to the location of a “rendering” code registry.

7. A secure electronic container according to claim 3, wherein said metadata describing the digital rights management mechanism(s) employed to package the content may refer to an installed component on a local system or a remote component or network service.
8. A method of handling the contents of a secure container as claimed in claim 1 in which is stored electronic media content of arbitrary format, the method comprising the steps of reading the external data and determining what, if any, digital rights management mechanism was used to package said content, retrieving or otherwise accessing an appropriate digital rights management handler accordingly, passing said content through said digital rights management handler, reading the external data and determining the media handler required to access and handle the contents, retrieving or otherwise accessing an appropriate media handler, and passing said content through said media handler.